INTRODUCTION

Section 15.2-2223 of the Virginia Code requires a community to prepare "a plan for the physical development of the jurisdiction and the Governing Body shall adopt a Comprehensive Plan." This comprehensive long-range plan is intended to guide growth and development within the community, and includes analysis, recommendations regarding the environment and historic resources, land use, public facilities, and transportation. For example, the plan should identify:

- Areas for various types of public and private development and uses such as residential, business, industrial;
- A transportation system, including streets, highways, rail, airports, and other associated facilities;
- Community service facilities, such as fire and rescue, libraries, parks, schools, water and wastewater treatment;
- Historic and renewal/redevelopment areas, as applicable;
- Land areas needing special management, for example floodplain and wetland areas which provide surface and groundwater resources;
- Recommended facilities which need to be included in the Fauquier County Capital Improvements Program; and
- Areas and measures for the construction of affordable housing to meet the needs of current and future residents of all income levels in the locality considering the needs of the community.

Section 15.2.2230 of the same code requires the periodic review of the Comprehensive Plan, at a minimum of once every 5 years. The plans for Bealeton, Opal and Remington represent the third update since the original Countywide Comprehensive Plan of 1967. This plan revision was completed in a fundamentally different way. It represents the first plan in this area to involve local citizens from its inception, including citizen review of the assumptions, which founded that 1967 Plan. This review began in the summer of 2000 when the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors appointed the Bealeton, Opal and Remington Citizen Committee. The two-year planning process that followed included many Citizen Committee meetings and community information sessions, which resulted in some fundamental changes.

The principal physical change in plan direction and preference is that new development, within the specified service districts, should incorporate design characteristics of older, traditional patterns of community design. While the community is justly proud of the technical quality of recent new development, these conventional cul-de-sac subdivisions tend to have monotonous lots, standardized housing design, limited pedestrian and vehicular access options, and poor linkage between neighborhoods, parks, open spaces, community facilities. While previously approved conventional development may be completed as originally conceived, the County is determined to provide alternative development options more consistent with traditional design norms. An analysis of this historic pattern is provided below.

An equally important fiscal change is a new policy to pace the rate of new development subject to future rezoning application in the Bealeton, Opal and Remington Service Districts. A phasing plan for properties rezoned subsequent to plan adoption would permit the County and the School Board to better match the creation of public facilities with the arrival of new residents.

Historic Settlement Patterns of Fauquier County Villages and Towns

Fauquier County, in common with other jurisdictions throughout Virginia, possesses a variety of long established settlements, each a unique product of geography, history and environment. However, all these settlements share certain essential features.

These settlements initially supported an agrarian economy with labor and basic commercial and educational services. The number of people involved in this support activity was not large, which thus limited settlement size and spatial frequency.

Close study of traditional settlements reveals a second common design feature. Each hamlet, village or small town invariably sought to "contain" or "hold" their segment of road by means of slight curves, the artful placement of buildings, overhead tree canopy and, in some cases, the construction of stone walls to limit views. Not surprisingly, most homes and other structures are conveniently located close to the road.

There may also be a psychological reason for the "closure" of views within rural settlements. Whereas the resident in a larger town or city, accustomed to the restricted focus of streets, discovers the open views of a park with welcome relief, in the country the psychological need is reversed. If wide-ranging views are a workaday norm, then closure of view within the hamlet or village offers a kind of psychological refuge from hard work in open fields. Of course such design closure is never total and the rear windows and back gardens of homes in a small settlement will still face open country.

The cross road settlements, villages and small towns of Fauquier County continue that traditional design form, which allows neighbors both private space and neighborly proximity to visit friends, walk to shops and services. Old and new residents of these communities wish to preserve the unique characteristics of their special place, and to build upon the existing historical pattern. The County and its residents intend to continue this centuries old historical pattern of walkable, mixed-use development, in an "updated" way to accommodate the automobile. Accordingly, the Bealeton, Opal and the Remington Service Districts will be designed according to the following guidelines, and note that the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances will need to be refined for their implementation:

Bealeton, Opal Remington Service District Design Guidelines

A. General Town Center Design Principles.

The Bealeton Town Center will be designed as a mixed-use commercial core surrounded by a mix of institutional and office uses and a mix of higher density residential uses. This Town Center will be surrounded by a well-defined edge of parks and natural areas. In addition, the Town Center will:

1. Be designed in a generally rectilinear pattern of blocks and interconnecting streets and alleys, defined by buildings, street furniture and landscaping, a place to be shared equally by pedestrians, bicyclists and cars.

2. Contain a core with a mix of lively and mutually supportive commercial and civic uses, such as a library, post office, churches, volunteer and fraternal halls, and spaces, and

should contain prominent civic features, such as fountains, national and local memorials, which establish and commemorate the place.

3. Possess urban parks and squares distributed throughout the Town Center. An important Square and a Town Park will be located at the core of the Town Center.

4. Be designed so that similar uses in the Town Center will generally front one another across local streets, while dissimilar uses will generally abut along alleys, rear property boundaries and across collector roads.

Note that the County's Planned Mixed Use Development, Village Commercial and other applicable zoning district categories will be carefully assessed to assure they address the visibility needs and smaller scale mixed use commercial area requirements of traditional patterns. These Zoning Ordinance categories need provisions for maximum setbacks, use flexibility, pedestrian amenities, new buildings constructed to the sidewalks, and parking lots to the rear or to the side of the retail areas fronting the streets.

B. General Guidelines Throughout the Service Districts

1. General Design Principles

Residential neighborhoods throughout the Service Districts will be designed as a mix of single-family detached, attached and multifamily dwellings linked by sidewalks and paths to an integrated system of neighborhood and "vest-pocket" parks and natural areas.

a. Neighborhoods should range between 80 and 160 acres in size and possess an identifiable community center or focal points, for example, a park, elementary school, recreational center.

b. Every neighborhood should contain a centrally located neighborhood park, a number of vest pocket parks and linear natural areas equipped with needed paths and other enhancements for community use. These parks and natural areas should be distributed in a way that every dwelling will have access and be within 800 feet of two of these amenities.



c. The neighborhoods will be designed in a generally rectilinear pattern of blocks and interconnecting streets and alleys, defined by buildings, sidewalks, street furniture (e.g., benches, planters, lighting) and landscaping, a place to be shared equally by pedestrians, bicyclists and cars.

d. The mix of dwelling types within the neighborhood should be fine grained, such that individual blocks will exemplify the mix.

e. Similar uses within the neighborhoods will generally front one another across local streets, while dissimilar uses will generally abut along rear property boundaries and across collector roads.

2. **Blocks and Lots**

a. **Blocks**

Blocks of a generally rectangular shape should be the main organizing feature of any settlement. While topography, existing trees and significant natural vegetation, hydrology and design intentions should influence block shape and size, the perimeter of such blocks should range between 1,000 and 1,800 feet as measured along lot frontage lines, between intersecting streets and major pedestrian routes.

b. **Lots**

Blocks may be subdivided into lots, having frontage on a street. The generally narrow rectangular shape of lots should respond to environmental factors, the proposed use, and design intentions. The communities will be best served by lot design that includes a variety of sizes and widths, to accommodate all the many current and future needs of the community, and to provide a varied and pleasing streetscape. Note that lots in Figure 1 range between 55 and 65 feet in width.

c. **Yards**

Commercial buildings in the Bealeton Town Center should be constructed adjacent to wide 10–16 feet sidewalks and have minimal side yards, to enhance pedestrian interest and efficiency. Sidewalks of this width allow sitting areas, specialized landscaping, outside eating, and pedestrian movement to occur with ease.

Front and side yards in residential neighborhoods should be minimal, 10–16 feet, while yard fences, walls and hedges should be used to define their form, yet share these transitional spaces with the public realm of the street. Public and institutional buildings should have yards appropriate for their function and design.

d. **Massing**

The building mass of Town Center structures should maintain a consistent volumetric size and shape, as seen from fronting and surrounding streets. Particular care should be taken to choose roof pitches that are similar with those nearby. Commercial structures and apartments should generally be 2½–3½ floors in height, while residential structures should generally be 1½–2 ½ floors in height. The building mass of public and institutional structures should be distinguishable from the others. The massing of adjacent dwellings in residential neighborhoods should vary in order to provide a wide range of housing options and create a more interesting streetscape.

e. **Doors and Porches**

These are perhaps the most important features in terms of an interesting streetscape. These features need to be chosen with special care for compatibility with the theme

of the supporting structure and with those nearby. The residential structures should have a front porch or covered entryway facing the street. Note that the double porch house in Figure 2 is technically a side entry, yet provides a full front porch to the street.



The residences shown above were constructed on Memorial Drive, Leesburg between 1997 and 2001.

3. **Roads and Streets**

a. **General**

Road, street and alley layouts should be designed in a hierarchical, rectilinear pattern – arterial, major/minor collector, and local access streets – with geometrical variation as required by traffic safety, the proposed use and design intentions. While any one road or street may extend to whatever functional length is necessary, these communities will be best served if the designer engineers streets to terminate road vistas no less frequently than every ¼ mile, whether with a slight bend in the road, a median or other feature.

Roads, streets and alleys should be designed to:

- Parallel and preserve existing fence lines, trees and stone walls wherever possible, to provide some sense of continuity with the historic land uses and patterns.
- Minimize alteration of natural features.
- Minimize the area devoted to motor vehicle travel.
- Promote pedestrian movement so that it is generally more convenient and safe to walk or bike short distances than to drive.

b. **Specific Design**

Roads and Streets should be designed as a co-ordinate set of parallel zones:

- A zone for moving vehicles.
- A buffer area of parked cars and vegetation.
- Sidewalks and bikeways.
- Residential, public and institutional yards or entry areas of commercial uses.

c. **Additional Street Definition**

In addition to the ¼ mile principle identified in 3.a., further street definition should be sought by means of:

- Fronting buildings generally placed no more than three or four times their height apart, and should usually be placed much closer in the Town Center core.
- Street trees – see Landscaping Section below.
- Intersectional corners of streets should be emphasized with decorative street lighting, sidewalk texture (e.g. brick) extension across the intersection, sidewalk "bump-outs" to reduce pedestrian exposure to moving vehicles and/or other features. Emphasizing the corners of fronting buildings at intersections should also be considered.
- Designing the street to visually terminate on a significant feature, such as an axially placed building façade, the view of a church spire or monument, or a significant view.

d. **Street Names**

New street name selections should seek to be contextual with local history using old place and family names, local events of significance, and geographical features.

e. **Street Lighting**

Lighting within blocks may rely on porch and individual carriage lights at doorways. Lighting at street intersections should be designed to project illumination down onto the street and pedestrian crossing areas.

4. **Parking**

a. Continuous parallel parking in the street buffer zone identified in 3.c above is encouraged. Otherwise, parking for residential, commercial, recreational, public and institutional uses should generally be located at the rear of lots. Parking in side yards for residential uses is allowed. Parking in side yards for other uses is also allowed although discouraged. No off-street parking shall be permitted in front yards. Adjacent off-street parking lots shall be interconnected.

b. Access to off-street parking should generally be achieved by means of alleys, shared access ways from streets, and parking lot interconnections. Driveway curb cuts on streets serving single-family detached houses are allowed if spaced to allow parallel parking for at least two cars between curb cuts.

c. Off-street parking areas and garages should be designed to have low visibility, and consequently shall not be located at the visual termination of roads and streets, and shall not be the principal use of corner lots. To this same end, garages and carports should be offset from direct view, and located a minimum of 6 feet behind the principal building façade.

d. Requirements for off-street parking serving an individual lot may be reduced provided that the applicant demonstrates adequate parking is provided on-street, per 3. c above, and/or within 200 feet of the lot.

5. **Landscaping**

a. Roads and streets shall generally be planted on both sides with street trees, spaced according to species, at regular intervals to ensure tree health and overhead leaf canopy in summer. In residential areas these trees may be planted in the front yards of homes, adjacent to the right-of-way.

b. Parking lots should be small with no more than 20–25 cars and, if larger, the parking lot should be divided into bays by lines of trees and shrubs. 15% of the interior of the parking lot should be landscaped. Within this interior space there should be one deciduous tree for every eight car spaces. Parking lots should be completely screened from adjacent streets with fencing and landscaping, walls and landscaping, or hedges. Such fencing should be a minimum of three feet tall.

6. **Utilities**

a. Utilities shall be located underground whenever possible. Utilities may be located above ground in rear alleys.

b. All above ground utility boxes and other facilities should be co-located and screened from road and street view.

C. Phasing of Residential Development

1. New residential development subject to rezoning applications within the three service districts shall be phased in a manner commensurate with application scale and the capacity of schools and other public infrastructure needed to support the new neighborhoods.

2. Should market conditions or other factors not permit the construction of the maximum allowed dwellings in any year, the balance of such dwellings may not be added to the maximum allowed in a subsequent year. Instead the phasing plan may be extended one or more years, and such dwellings may be constructed in the extension period.